

Testimony for HB479, Improve access to healthy school meals.

Chairman Jore and members of the committee: For the record my name is Carolyn Smillie, I am a junior at Carroll College and am interning with the Montana Catholic Conference this session. The Montana Catholic Conference is the public policy arm for the two Catholic Bishops in Montana, representing over 140,000 Catholics in the two dioceses statewide.

I am here today to testify on behalf of the Montana Catholic Conference for the Montana children who would be positively affected by this bill.

The Montana Catholic Conference upholds the strides public policy has taken to ensure that schoolchildren are fed in a safe and healthy environment.

In the summer of 2005 I volunteered with a summer food service program in Helena, which is the same program present in schools during the year. Every day lunch would be provided at public parks throughout Helena. At these locations I witnessed firsthand the positive outcome that these lunches had on underprivileged children in Montana.

Many Montana children benefit greatly from free lunch and breakfast programs. But there are places in which the most basic of amenities are needed either to implement or to continue these services. Many children go without essential nutrition because their school does not own milk coolers or steam tables to keep their food at a safe temperature. Others lack basic necessities like tables, (I am told at Helena Middle School students sit on the floor for lack of proper seating); still more lack ovens and transport equipment, or even refrigerators and freezers. This equipment is essential and yet impossible to get without the necessary funds.

Every child in Montana deserves an equal chance to succeed. House Bill 479 provides the means of assistance to Montana schools that would provide for these necessities.

I thank Representative Raser for sponsoring this bill and urge a do pass. Thank you Mr. Chairman and the members of this committee for your time and attention.

Top 12 ~ Research Evidence Links Nutrition to School Success

<p>REVIEW REPORT: Strong evidence that nutrition affects school attendance and behavior</p> <p>Children who eat regular meals and have an adequate nutrient intake do better at school than those who skip meals and have inadequate nutrient intakes.</p> <p>Rapid Review of the Literature on Association Between Nutrition and Pupil Performance, Obesity Action Coalition. NZ Ministry of Health (2006)</p>	<p>REVIEW ARTICLE: Breakfast associated with healthy weight and improved cognitive functioning</p> <p>Summary of 47 studies showing that breakfast eaters are more likely to have a healthy body weight and have better test scores, memory, and school attendance.</p> <p>Breakfast Habits, Nutritional Status, Body Weight, and Academic Performance in Children and Adolescents, G. Rampersaud, et al. <i>Journal of the American Dietetic Association</i> (2005)</p>
<p>REVIEW ARTICLE: Food insufficiency has negative impact on learning; breakfast aids performance</p> <p>Major review of multiple studies documents serious negative effect of food insufficiency on learning and positive impact of healthy breakfast on cognition and attendance.</p> <p>Nutrition and Student Performance at School, H. Taras. <i>Journal of School Health</i> (2005)</p>	<p>REVIEW REPORT: Growing evidence that kids who eat poorly do not perform well academically</p> <p>Improvements in nutrition can improve academic performance; research indicates that overweight children face other factors that contribute to poor performance.</p> <p>The Learning Connection: Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools, Action for Healthy Kids, Chicago (2004)</p>
<p>Being an overweight girl (or becoming so) is a significant risk factor for negative school outcomes</p> <p>For girls, becoming overweight between kindergarten and end of third grade was significantly associated with lower test scores and more behavioral problems.</p> <p>Childhood overweight and elementary school Outcome, A Datar and R Sturm Hanson, <i>International Journal of Obesity</i> (2006)</p>	<p>Malnourished children tend have lower cognitive abilities when compared to well-nourished children</p> <p>There is a negative effect of pediatric malnutrition (either under- or overweight) on cognitive abilities as measured by the math and reading recognition scores.</p> <p>Food for Thought: Cognitive and Behavioral Effects of Pediatric Malnutrition in US, S.L. Averett and D.C. Stifel, Congress of Economics and Human Biology, France (2006)</p>

Top 12 ~ Research Evidence Links Nutrition to School Success

<p>Food insecurity negatively affects K-3 academic performance, weight gain, and social skills</p> <p>Being food insecure had negative effect on mathematics learning in kindergarten and is associated with impaired reading performance and social skills in girls.</p> <p>Food Insecurity Affects School Children's Academic Performance, Weight Gain, and Social Skills, D.F. Jyoti, et al. <i>Journal of Nutrition</i> (2005)</p>	<p>Overall nutrition and eating breakfast improve test scores in 9th graders across all income levels</p> <p>Any nutritious intake and eating breakfast both associated with increases in reading and math scores, even after accounting for socio-demographic differences.</p> <p>Student Health Risks, Resilience, and Academic Performance in California: T.L. Hanson and G. Austin, <i>WestEd Publications</i> (2003)</p>
<p>School Breakfast Program improves math scores, while reducing rates of school absences and tardiness</p> <p>Eating school breakfast associated with significant improvements in academic performance and psychosocial functioning among low-income children.</p> <p>Diet, Breakfast, and Academic Performance in Children, R.E. Kleinman, et al. <i>Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism</i> (2002)</p>	<p>Food-insufficient youth have lower math scores, more grade repeats, and more school suspensions</p> <p>Food-insufficient children/teens more than twice as likely to have repeated a grade and missed more school days. Teens had dramatically more psychosocial problems.</p> <p>Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development, K. Alaimo, et al. <i>Pediatrics</i> (2001)</p>
<p>Participation in school breakfast program improves math scores and attendance among inner city children</p> <p>Students who increased participation in school breakfast had significant increases in math scores and significant decreases in school absence and tardiness.</p> <p>Relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning, J.M. Murphy, et al. <i>Archives Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine</i> (1998)</p>	<p>Hunger and food insufficiency have seriously negative impact on psychosocial functioning at school</p> <p>Teachers reported that hungry/at-risk children had higher levels of hyperactivity, absenteeism, and tardiness than those with sufficient food.</p> <p>Relationship between hunger and psychosocial functioning in low- income American children, J.M. Murphy, et al. <i>Journal American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i> (1998)</p>